The Fourth Manitoba Conference on Aging
Fiction Fact and the Future
May 21 to May 24, 1985
University of Manitoba

Status of Recommendations

Manitoba Council on Aging
November 1989

90-04955/

The objectives of the Fourth Manitoba Conference on Aging were "to increase awareness of the realities of aging and of the need for policies and practices that promote the dignity, equality and independence of older Manitobans and encourage their active participation in civic life."

The Conference was called by the (then) Minister of Health, the Honourable L.L. Desjardins, who appointed a planning committee composed of representatives of the Provincial and Federal Government, non-government organizations and seniors organizations. It was attended by about 650 delegates and visitors from all parts of Manitoba, from other provinces and the United States who met in workshops covering 18 topic areas and produced 174 recommendations.

The Conference Proceedings were widely distributed among government and non-government organizations. In the years following the Conference these recommendations have helped to shape the development of services for Manitoba's senior citizens.

It has been the task of the Manitoba Council on Aging to monitor the status of these Conference recommendations. It seems timely, four years after the Conference, to report on the status of these recommendations and to identify those that should continue to be pursued. The following report attempts to do this.

In preparing this report, some liberties have been taken with the recommendations: each workshop produced a few recommendations relating to topic areas of other workshops, and these have been moved into their appropriate topic area. Recommendations have been condensed and summarized. In all cases, the aim has been to accurately reflect the purpose of the original recommendation. This report reflects the status of recommendations as they appear to stand as of November 1989.

The Council wishes to thank the following persons for their assistance in providing information regarding the status of recommendations:

Liaison Officers to the Provincial Gerontologist and the Manitoba Council on Aging and other Provincial Government employees representing the following Departments:

Family Services
Health
Manitoba Health Services Commission
Labor
Culture, Heritage and Recreation
Education
Finance
Attorney General
Manitoba Telephone System
Government Services
Rural Development
Natural Resources
Cooperative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs
Urban Affairs
Highways & Transportation
Housing
Ombudsman
Seniors' Directorate

Admininistrators/Directors of Nursing of the following Personal Care Homes:

Fort Garry Care Centre, Winnipeg
Golden Links Lodge, Winnipeg
Fairview Home Inc. Brandon
Maples Personal Care Home, Winnipeg
Lions Prairie Manor, Portage la Prairie
Holy Family Nursing Home - Winnipeg
Flin Flon Personal Care Home, Flin Flon

Staff of the following agencies:

Age and Opportunity Centre
Creative Retirement Manitoba
Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba
Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg
City of Winnipeg Police, Community Relations
RCMP, Community Relations
Transport Institute, University of Manitoba
Manitoba Society of Seniors
Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association
Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses

The Public Trustee of Manitoba
Workshop #1

Summary of Recommendations:

This workshop examined the functions of the Office of the Public Trustee and other legal provisions for the protection of individuals who are unable or incompetent to manage their own affairs. Changes were recommended to existing regulations pertaining to Orders of Supervision, including regulations for the instruction of those assigned to provide personal supervision, and for the regular mandatory review of Orders. Improvement to regulations governing private Committeeship, as well as provision for a court to recommend a private Committee was recommended. The workshop also called for a registry and reporting mechanism for Powers of Attorney, and provisions for lay persons in personal care homes to witness documents.

New legislation was recommended for the protection of persons with varying degrees of incapacity without loss of rights, including the appointment of a Public Guardian.

Education about the importance, and the implications of the various legal provisions for the protection of the vulnerable adult was seen as essential for the general public, seniors, and those who work with seniors.

Status of Recommendations:

Virtually no substantial change has taken place in legislation or regulations since 1985. The workshop recommendations, intended to protect the rights of vulnerable persons, and to ensure that those responsible for their wellbeing and their finances be better regulated, continue to represent valid concerns.

Education of seniors, professionals and the caregivers of the elderly regarding their rights and obligations is probably the best means of protection. Although organizations such as the Community Legal Education Association is working to educate the public on these issues, much more remains to be done.

Ongoing Recommendations:

1. That legislation be enacted to provide protection with minimal loss of rights and that a Public Guardian be appointed to supervise and protect persons with varying degrees of incapacity.

2. That education on Powers of Attorney, Committeeship, Orders of Supervision, Wills and other legal means of protecting the vulnerable adult be supported and increased.

Health Care: The Relationship Between the Formal and Informal Care Systems
Workshop #2

Summary of Recommendations:

This workshop examined the informal care system, which includes self care and care provided by family, friends and community, recommending ways in which the formal health care system might strengthen and support it. (The importance of highly trained personnel in the formal system, also recommended, is dealt with elsewhere.)

Planning is required in order to insure that the formal health care system recognizes and supports informal care; research is required to understand its needs and practises; and increased funding is needed to augment services which support informal care, including the resources of the Continuing Care Program. As well, individuals should be educated in self care and prevention of disease, and mutual aid resources such as peer counselling and information systems should be promoted through voluntary organizations such as senior councils.

Other recommendations in support of informal care included the planning of seniors' housing on the basis of seniors' health needs; that interfacility ambulance transfers be covered by MHSC; that seniors be encouraged to obtain supplementary health insurance; and that the provision of Home Care equipment be based on accurate physical assessment.

Status of Recommendations:

Several major program developments have occurred in Manitoba since 1985 which are aimed at support of the informal care system. The Support Services to Seniors Program funds 117 community-based projects (as of June, 1989) which provide supportive services to frail elderly persons. Discover Choices, a health promotion program fosters mutual and individual responsibility for one's health. As well, a major review of the Manitoba Continuing Care Program (The Price Waterhouse Report) has recommended a number of changes aimed at better use of the resources of this program whose major purpose is to support care in the community.

Movement has occurred in some other recommendations also: public housing is currently undergoing an examination of the implications of the increasing needs of its frail elderly tenants. The provision of mobility and functional aides through Home Care Equipment is now usually based on an Occupational Therapist's assessment in those areas of the province where this service is available. However, there is no plan to have inter-facility ambulance service covered by MHSC, and only 17.8 percent of Manitoba seniors subscribe to Blue Cross (January, 1989) which covers ambulance and other supplementary services.

In spite of the new programs noted, the need for education regarding individual self care initiatives and support for family caregivers continue to be valid issues. This is particularly true regarding the latter, since neither Support Services to Seniors or Discover Choices offers support via the provision of care. The number of individuals receiving services in their homes through the Continuing Care Program now exceeds the number in Personal Care Homes. As the 80+ population increases, and more people are choosing to remain in the community, the stress placed on informal support systems is likely to increase.

Ongoing Recommendations:

1. That the formal health care system support the informal system through research into needs; planning to meet those needs; and funding to augment existing supportive services.

2. That elderly persons be educated in self care and prevention through peer counselling, self help groups and information about community and government supports.

Educational Opportunities for Seniors
Workshop #3

Summary of Recommendations:

This workshop considered issues affecting the availability of educational opportunities for seniors. It saw a need for an increase in course availability and sustained funding, as well as recommending a number of factors that would improve accessibility. At the university level, affordable fees, flexibility in the structure of courses and ease in accumulating credits were recommended. The provision of transportation, wheelchair accessibility, locating courses in public schools, and special provision for persons confined to home or institutions, or who live in remote communities were recommendations for improvements in accessibility at all levels. Other recommendations dealt with research into the health benefits of continuing education, and a seniors' building in the North Portage Development.

Status of Recommendations:

The four years since the conference has seen an increase in the number and variety of educational courses available at low or no cost to mobile urban seniors. Non urban areas of the province have been left behind however, as comparatively little is available to seniors living in small towns and rural communities. There are some new developments: Creative Retirement Manitoba is increasing programming in some non urban areas, especially from its Westman branch, and would do more if funding were available. The Education Teleconference Program at the University of Manitoba makes a limited number of credit and non credit courses available to 23 communities at no charge to senior participants. As well, the Department of Education facilitates the use of distance education technology for school divisions and community colleges.

A number of public schools are now equipped with wheelchair ramps and school facilities across the province are fairly accessible to community activities. Creative Retirement's Homebound Learning Program is a highly successful innovation which takes education into the homes of frail homebound seniors in Winnipeg.

Research has been conducted elsewhere on the mental health benefits for participants of continuing education, but none is planned locally.

With regard to a seniors' building in the North Portage Development, this project does not appear to be economically feasible.

Ongoing Recommendations:

That Post Secondary Adult and Continuing Education (PACE) explore a variety of ways to offer educational opportunities to seniors in remote areas, in institutions or confined to home.

Health Promotion and Aging
Workshop #4

Summary of Recommendations:

Guided by the definition "Health Promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over and to improve their health", this workshop stressed the importance of the use of marketing techniques in researching and designing health promotion programs, and of seniors as a resource to ensure that programs are relevant to seniors. The message of health promotion must be consistent with the World Health Organization definition of health; it must present a positive image of aging, using seniors as role models; it should emphasize the importance of informal supports; and it should also promote acceptance of those who are not independent. A health promotion campaign should be conducted at the community level and be accessible to all seniors. As well, advertising directed to the elderly should promote health and independence.

The workshop was also concerned with health and safety hazards, recommending legislation to protect seniors and education and counselling conducted by physicians and health professionals on safety, nutrition, drug use, etc.

Status of Recommendations:

The concept and philosophy of health promotion has gained prominence since 1985 as a result of the 1986 Federal Health and Welfare paper, "Achieving Health for All", and through the Discover Choices Program which has been mounted in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Consistent with the recommendations of the Conference, extensive market research was conducted to identify the concerns of the target population and to design the Discover Choices Program. As well, seniors played a prominent role in its planning and implementation. Discover Choices video and print materials cover a wide range of topics, conforming to the World Health Organization definition of health. The concepts of independence and mutual aid are stressed through its multi-media and community development program which promote informed choices through increased knowledge of social, environmental and lifestyle factors affecting health and quality of life.

With regard to education on health and safety, more information resources are now available to seniors on health related issues, such as the Medical Information Line for the elderly which provides toll-free telephone access to pharmaceutical information. However, national data indicates that Canadians over 65 sustain a rate of accidental death and injury that is approximately three times higher than that of the rest of the population, suggesting that education and legislation on safety hazards continues to be an important issue for seniors.

Ongoing Recommendations

That legislation and education be designed to protect seniors from health and safety hazards.

Some Legal Aspects of Dying
Workshop #5

Summary of Recommendations:

This workshop examined three areas of importance to individuals in maintaining control over his/her medical care and use of assets at the time of approaching death: living will declarations; powers of attorney, and wills, including implications of the Testators' Family Maintenance Act. Participants were concerned that individual rights to make decisions be paramont, and recommended that when this right is at risk, formal legal procedure be applied.

Status of Recommendation:

No legislative change has occurred since 1985 to secure the individual's right to control medical care via a living will. A number of geriatric facilities consult with patients and/or relatives shortly after admission regarding the use of aggressive treatment in case of impending death.

Care Facilities: Dignity Versus Depersonalization
Workshop #6

Summary of Recommendations

Participants in this workshop were concerned with the quality of life of residents of personal care homes. Recommendations touched on standards, with a call for accreditation of facilities and revision of the measurement tool relating patient care levels to professional and non professional staffing formulas. The major area of concern however was with addressing the psychosocial needs of residents and the provision of a homelike atmosphere in personal care homes that would be free of unnecessary restraints and be consistent with residents' former lifestyles and cultural values.

A wide range of recommendations was put forth for implementing these objectives, including increasing activity staff and the use of volunteers under a staff volunteer coordinator; the use of individual care plans; the availability of psychologists; and the appointment of an advocate for the legally incompetent. A statement on the use of restraints was called for, and facilities were asked to permit residents to take risks if they choose to do so.

Concern with the quality of residents' lives should be reflected in the physical design of facilities. Participants called for small facilities that, in rural areas, would be located near towns similar in ethnic makeup to that of residents, and for a study of the juxtaposition of personal care homes with elderly persons housing. Facilities should be designed to provide private and communal space, promote residents' physical movement and should offer an alternative to buzzer alarm systems.

Information about personal care homes was considered an important need: booklets for prospective and for new residents and their families, and a formal orientation to the facility were considered essential. Residents and families should be encouraged to participate in the life of the facility via resident councils that have direct access to facility boards, and through assuming responsibility for day to day activities. Family support groups were recommended.

This workshop also considered the needs of other clientele of the personal care home, recommending the provision of day care for Alzheimer victims, respite care, and for separate facilities for young adult disabled persons.

Status of Recommendations:

The changes that are taking place in the personal care home population, arising from an increasing proportion of cognitively impaired residents, has important implications for staffing and programming within these institutions. It has made the need for revisions to the dependency level assessment tool even more pressing than it was in 1985. Such revisions have been in process for some time and are being tested by MHSC. At this point however, nursing staffing guidelines have not changed.

Some additional professional positions have been made available in recent years, the most notable being the location of psychogeriatric teams in three Winnipeg personal care homes (Deer Lodge, Bethania and Tache), all having outreach responsibilites to other Winnipeg homes. Rural personal care homes are encouraged to use local mental health facilities available in some communities.

Increased activity staff, hiring of volunteer coordinators and seeking accreditation has depended largely on the resources of individual facilities, the larger ones being better able to stretch resources to cover expenses that are not included in MHSC allocations.

The personal care homes* that provided information for this report were well aware of the psychosocial needs of their residents, agreed with most of the recommendations related to the quality of life of residents, and try to implement them as best they can within the limitations of their funding resources. Several reported that the philosophic aspirations related to the dignity and privacy of residents is included in their facility's mission statement. Facilities tend to vary in their practises related to the assignment of an advocate for legally incompetent residents, some regarding families and others, the social worker as responsible. Legal responsibility however, rests with the Public or Private Committee. They were aware of the 1988 MARN statement on the use of physical and chemical restraints and some reported using no such restraints. The legal implications of allowing residents to take risks were raised by some.

The personal care homes that have been constructed or extended in recent years are medium size units of 100-200 beds, and while there is some agreement that the small facility may be more homelike, its economic viability is questioned. MHSC design standards require the provision of private and communal space, and some homes have found alternatives to the safety buzzers.

The University of Manitoba Centre on Aging has conducted a research study on the implications of Personal Care Home - Elderly Persons Housing juxtaposition, and several homes have constructed adjacent housing in recent years.

All personal care homes who responded reported that they provide prospective and new residents and families with information booklets and conduct some form of orientation. Most have Resident Councils but few report directly to the facility's Board. Family support seems to be dependent on the availability of social work staff.

With regard to others served by personal care homes, there has been no progress in the establishment of a special facility for young physically disabled people, but the number of respite beds provided in personal care facilities has increased, and a day program for cognitively impaired people is in operation at Deer Lodge Centre.

* A small but relatively representative group of seven personal care homes provided full and thoughtful responses to the recommendations of this workshop.

Ongoing Recommendations

1. That the Manitoba Health Services Commission continue its work in revising and testing the dependency level tool and the professional and non professional staffing formula related to it.

2. That personal care homes continue to be vigilant in addressing the quality of life of residents, with particular concern for their dignity, privacy and psychosocial needs.

3. That the Provincial Government be urged to develop special facilities for young adult disabled persons.

Community Opportunities and Aging
Workshop #7

Summary of Recommendations:

While community opportunities can refer to a wide range of pursuits, this workshop focussed mainly on volunteer opportunities for seniors. Its recommendations dealt with an expansion of the volunteer activities available to seniors, and with making seniors aware of, or marketing, that information. The workshop was concerned with removing the real or perceived barriers to community activity, including attitudinal barriers of those seniors who do not value non-work related activity and of organizations whose stereotypical view of seniors limits the opportunities they offer to this group. It was recommended that the cost to the volunteer be addressed by the use of tax credits or by payment of expenses, and that opportunities in rural areas be expanded.

Status of Recommendations:

Increasing numbers of people of all ages are involved in volunteer activity. Seniors' agencies and organizations are heavily committed to expanding involvement of senior volunteers. There does not appear to be a notable increase of senior volunteers in other areas of the formal system, in spite of training provided by the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg for volunteer coordinators on the needs of senior volunteers.

Physical barriers to participation have been addressed by government departments and many non-governmental organizations. Two federal programs are expected to exert an impact on seniors' attidudinal barriers to volunteerism: The Imagine Program, a media program designed to encourage philanthropy and volunteerism in Canada; and Discover Choices, a Health Promotion Program, one of whose goals is to foster concepts of inter-dependence in older adults. The general improvement in the public image of aging, noted in regard to Workshop #16 may encourge the formal system to make an effort to recruit seniors.

Many agencies who use volunteers provide some reimbursement for expenses, but this is not universal. However, the idea of a tax credit for volunteer activity has not been pursued, and is widely considered to be unworkable. With regard to rural opportunities, although there are fewer agencies to use volunteers, a higher percentage of people are involved in volunteer activity, largely informal in nature, in areas of the province outside of Winnipeg.

Ongoing Recommendations:

That users of volunteers be encouraged to expand opportunities for seniors; mount aggressive recruitment campaigns; assist with some costs; and provide recognition for volunteer work.

Abuse of Vulnerable Adults
Workshop #8

Summary of Recommendations:

This workshop, and others that touched upon this issue, called for the enactment of protective legislation that would include a provision for guardianship of vulnerable adults. It recommended the establishment of a service, directed to the abused and the abuser, which would include investigation and assessment, counselling, information on resources and safe houses. The workshop also recommended the education of professionals and the general public about abuse, and called for research to assist in the planning and monitoring of programs.

Status of Recommendations:

Provincial government action in favor of protective legislation was abandoned in 1986 because of the anticipated costs involved in implementing the legislation and the supportive services it would require. Recently however, a number of new initiatives are in process:

1) An Elder Abuse Resource Centre is being planned by the Age and Opportunity Centre to provide information and direct case coordination services. Funding is currently being sought to implement this service.

2) A White Paper on Elder Abuse was released by the Manitoba Seniors' Directorate in July 1989. Public consultation is being sought on recommendations for government action.

3) MSOS has published a pamphlet on Elder Abuse.

4) A national research study has been conducted which attempts to identify the incidence and circumstances surrounding abuse in Canada.

Recommendations for Ongoing Action:

1. That legislation be enacted for the protection of the abused elderly which would include provisions for guardianship of vulnerable adults.

2. That the Age and Opportunity Centre's Elder Abuse Respite Centre be supported and monitored.

3. That public and professional education regarding abuse of the elderly be implemented.

Advocacy and Networking
Workshop #9

Summary of Recommendations

This workshop recommended that seniors organize to advocate in support of their own needs. To do this it is recommended that they form a central base for advocacy that would promote the concept among seniors, and also train seniors and seniors groups in the techniques of advocacy. Seniors advocacy should be supported by families, professional groups and the news media, and by government through the provision of unrestricted funding.

Status of Recommendations

The Manitoba Society of Seniors (MSOS) has assumed an increasingly strong and aggressive role in advocating on seniors issues. With individual memberships totalling 10,000 and over 1,000 clubs represented in its Regional Councils, MSOS can rightfully claim to speak for a sizeable portion of Manitoba seniors. As well, it has been used in a consultive role in a training course for seniors sponsored by the University of Manitoba Continuing Education Department. The Manitoba Council on Aging advises the Provincial Government on issues of concern.

On the national scene, One Voice has become an effective lobby organization on behalf of seniors. The National Advisory Council on Aging continues to raise issues of concern for consideration by the Federal Government.

Both MSOS and One Voice continue to need the support of professional organizations and the news media, as well as funding support.

Ongoing Recommendations

1. That MSOS continue as a central base for seniors advocacy in Manitoba.

2. That individual seniors, the Manitoba Council on Aging, professional organizations and the news media support MSOS in its advocacy role.

Pharmaceutical Issue
Workshop #10

Summary of Recommendations:

This workshop focussed its recommendations on the need for research, information and education, and for action to address misuse of medications.

More research is needed on the effect of medications and of medication interactions on the elderly. Not only seniors themselves, but physicians and other professionals working with the elderly require easily available information and education on drugs and the elderly: the Medical Information Line for the Elderly should receive greater support, should have a toll-free telephone line and should provide information in languages other than English. Local pharmacists, and a pharmacy consultant in the Department of Health should provide consultation to the public, to physicians, to care facility staff and other health care professionals. More public information is needed in the use of the Pharmacare Program.

The workshop was also concerned about the use of psychotropic drugs as a restraint for the elderly and with the over use of medications by the elderly. Stopping the distribution of drug samples, and developing compliance aids was also called for.

Status of Recommendations

Only minor progress has been made toward the implementation of these recommendations. Some research is being done on the effect of medications on the elderly but there are many gaps in knowledge and virtually all drug testing and standardization is carried out on adults under 60.

The Provincial Department of Government Services provides a toll-free telephone line for the Medical Information Line for the Elderly, but funding for the service is precarious and inadequate. The Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association has developed several presentations for pharmacists to deliver to interested groups, and one of the national drug store chains (Shoppers Drug Mart) has located a part time consultant pharmacist in one of its Winnipeg stores. The same store has the capability of providing prescription drugs in unit dosage packages to the public as a compliance aid, but this is not advertised and few drugstores provide this service. The Department of Health does not employ a consultant pharmacist although this has been identified as a need for Continuing Care and other community health programs.

The use of psychotropics in Personal Care Homes is now monitored by the Prescription Guide Committee of MHSC which sets guidelines and standards for prescribing medications and other pharmaceutical practises, reviews drug utilization, and offers in-service programs to PCH staff.

The Minister of Health has announced a plan to track the dispensing of prescription drugs through a computer data bank, scheduled to begin January 1, 1990. This system is expected to identify over-prescribing on the part of physicians, and double-doctoring by patients.

Ongoing Recommendations

1. That research into the effects of medications on the elderly be increased.

2. That physicians, health care professionals and seniors be educated about the effect of medications on the elderly.

3. That a pharmacy consultant be established within the Department of Health to facilitate and encourage the development of compliance aids; to develop educational programs and to liaise with existing professionals and service networks.

Information Dissemination
Workshop #11

Summary of Recommendations

The importance of easy access to information about services for seniors was the major concern of this workshop, and recommendations focussed on the means of achieving it.

A toll-free telephone information service with computerized data storage accessible to telephone receptionists was considered to be the major service needed. The telephone line should be complemented by the location of computer information terminals in public places that are frequently used by seniors; by print information; and by information provided by community groups, peer counsellors and by the media. The Manitoba Senior Citizens' Handbook should be given to all Old Age Security applicants.

The Workshop also recommended that marketing techniques be used to promote seniors services, and that non-profit organizations should receive financial assistance for promotion. Promotion might be linked to commercial ventures.

Status of Recommendations

A toll-free Seniors' Information Line was put into operation by the Manitoba Seniors' Directorate in September 1989. As well, a wide range of information sources are available in the Province, and especially in Winnipeg. The major seniors organizations, service agencies and senior centres provide information on services, and the regional Services to Seniors staff and Community Resource Coordinators throughout the Province are an information resource within their own districts. In addition to the Seniors Information Line, the Provincial Government provides four toll-free telephone information lines: Manitoba Health Services Commission, Citizens' Inquiry, Manitoba Government Central Switchboard, and the Medical Information Line for the Elderly. These numbers are listed under all telephone exchange areas of Manitoba Telephone System's provincial telephone directory. In Winnipeg, Community Contact uses an automated data bank in providing information by telephone on a wide variety of services in the city, and a number of social agencies, including Age and Opportunity Centre have access to it. The Manitoba Senior Citizens' Handbook is mailed to all Manitobans in the year of their 60th birthday.

Some sources who were consulted in the preparation of this report were of the opinion that enhancement of existing agencies' capabilities of giving out information, and of seniors' ability to use it, may now be more appropriate than creating a new resource for the dissemination of information.

Ongoing Recommendations:

That the central telephone line for seniors be complemented by other forms of information.

Transportation Needs of the Elderly
Workshop #12

Summary of Recommendations

Recognizing the contribution of accessible and supportive transportation to the independence and quality of life of the elderly, the workshop recommended that transportation services be considered a right, and that it be funded as such by government.

The workshop also recommended that the corporate sector, especially oil companies, might play some role, and that the Transport Institute at the University of Manitoba act as a resource for information about alternative transportation modes for the elderly.

Status of Recommendations

Although transportation services for the elderly is not considered "a right", transportation for people who are mobility disadvantaged has expanded since 1985. In 1988 the Program for the Mobility Disadvantaged in Rural Manitoba involved 33 participating communities, and Winnipeg Handi Transit embarked on a four-year expansion plan that is expected to double the number of trips per year by 1991. Both services use wheelchair vehicles in the provision of service and both are subsidized via cost-sharing agreements between provincial and local municipal governments in addition to low cost user fees.

The Transport Institute has expressed interest in transportation for people with special needs, but has not been active in this area. Nor has the corporate sector had any involvement in transportation for the elderly.

Ongoing Recommendations:

1. That governments continue to expand their support for transportation services for the elderly.

2. That the Transport Institute at the University of Manitoba be asked to act as a clearing house, research centre and community resource, providing an exchange of information about transportation models tried elsewhere in Canada and the world.

Workers with Older Persons: Awareness, Training and Research
Workshop #13

Summary of Recommendations:

In considering the education and training that is needed by people who work with the elderly, participants in this workshop called for a comprehensive focus on the physical, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual factors that contribute to the wellbeing of the elderly and for elderly people themselves to be involved in the planning and delivery of training programs.

The specific training requirements of various categories and levels of workers, and the resources available to meet them, should be the subject of a comprehensive survey. Training standards should be established, and courses should be more available outside of Winnipeg. An undergraduate program in gerontology is needed at the University level.

Continuing education and in-service training for all levels of staff should be the responsibility of personal care homes. Minimum standards of competence should be established for all health care workers and performance appraisals should be conducted regularly, with financial incentives provided for staff who upgrade their training.

Participants suggested that efforts be made to improve the status of persons who work with the elderly and to find a means of identifying and measuring the personal attributes of people who work successfully with older persons.

Status of Recommendations

There is a growing awareness of the importance of gerontological education for those who work with the elderly and most formal education and training courses include some degree of instruction on the physical, psycho-social and emotional factors associated with aging. Instructors often invite a senior to speak to a class, but seldom are seniors included in curriculum development.

With the exception of the Centre on Aging's publications listing courses on aging at the three Manitoba universities, there has been no attempt to survey educational needs and resources. The Centre has recently completed a study on curriculum development, and has published a proposal for an interdisciplinary undergraduate program in gerontology at the University of Manitoba. As well, a number of certificate and non-certificate programs are available through the Continuing Education Division. Red River Community College offers certificate programs for Activity Workers that are available evenings in Winnipeg, and through regional centres in Selkirk, Portage and Winkler, and by correspondence and teleconferencing.

Formal training of aides and orderlies is increasing in both institutional and community settings. The Manitoba Home Care Program is working toward having all direct service staff trained at the certificate level in both urban and rural regions, and covers the cost of this training. Standards of competence are built into training modules. In this and in some institutional settings, performance standards are written into job descriptions and performance appraisal is based on these standards. It is not known how many institutional and community staff are actually meeting these standards on a regular basis, or how quickly new staff are trained and meet performance standards. There is substantial staff turnover at this level in both community and institutional workplaces.

In-service and continuing education opportunities and practices vary in all workplaces but is considered an important goal by all informants. Seldom is this kind of training rewarded in financial terms.

Ongoing Recommendations

1. That gerontological education, consisting of information on the social, emotional and psychological needs of the elderly, be more available to all who work with the elderly.

2. That courses be more easily available outside of Winnipeg.

Housing and Living Arrangements of Older Persons
Workshop #14

Summary of Recommendations

Participants in this workshop called for greater awareness of seniors' housing needs in the curricula of the University of Manitoba Faculty of Architecture and Interior Design, and on the part of practising architects, designers and builders.

Information on seniors' housing needs should be sought via consultation with seniors. Also recommended: that the National Advisory Council on Aging (NACA) conduct a survey on consumer demands, and that an advisory pool of seniors and other experts be assembled to advise on seniors' housing.

A wider range of design alternatives should be developed, and innovations to existing structures such as schools be explored, with monitoring and evaluation of such projects.

The workshop also called for a change in policy regarding social and recreational space in non profit housing which would be available to the community; for a wide array of financial options and support servics to enable people to remain in their own homes; and for the Manitoba Society of Seniors to provide consumer information on the availability of seniors' housing.

Status of Recommendations

There has been considerable progress in the availability of seniors' housing in Manitoba. However, the University of Manitoba Faculty of Architecture still has no courses dealing specifically with seniors' housing design need in its Departments of Architecture or Interior Design, although it does involve seniors in its design courses for projects relating to seniors' housing. Some courses touch on the subject, and students may select projects or theses in this area.

Increasingly, seniors have made their housing needs known: the NACA's study of housing options "Housing an Aging Population", prepared in conjunction with CMHA and the Canadian Housing Design Council was conducted in consultation with seniors, as were several other studies. One Voice's Habitat Conferences, in preparation for the 1988 CMHC sponsored conference on housing options for seniors was a nation-wide exercise in eliciting consumer needs and preferences. In Manitoba, an advisory pool on seniors' housing has not been formally assembled, but consultants are available to private non-profit and cooperative developments targeting a seniors clientel, with good results (e.g. Manitoba Seniors' Rentalstart Program).

A number of research projects and innovative conversions are underway at the national and provincial level to explore design options and rehabilitation/conversion projects. As well, a STEP project was undertaken in 1988 to review design guidelines and specifications for Elderly Persons Housing in Manitoba. This study, not yet released, may indicate the degree to which Manitoba Housing is implementing design innovations in local housing projects.

Regarding the availability to the community of social and recreational space in Elderly Persons Housing, government policy on funding of this space has not changed; policy does not prohibit use by community seniors but costs are not eligible for cost sharing and must be absorbed into the project budget.

Supports to enable seniors to remain in the community have increased considerably through projects funded by Provincial Support Services to Seniors in those communities that have requested and supported such services. More innovative initiatives such as granny flats and home equity plans have not developed. Assistance for home repairs and renovation and tax assistance is available to eligible seniors in Manitoba.

Finally, information to seniors on the availability of seniors' housing is provided in Winnipeg by Age & Opportunity Centre and outside Winnipeg by Services to Seniors staff and Community Resource Coordinators.

Ongoing Recommendations

1. That CMHC and Manitoba Housing continue to explore and implement innovations in building and design specifications to broaden the range of choices available in seniors' housing.

2. That current government policy for non-residential space in non-profit housing be re-examined with a view to possible development of social and recreational space for seniors from the community.

3. That seniors be consulted regarding the options available and design of seniors' housing and that senior consumers evaluate plans and designs.

4. That the Faculty of Architecture include courses in housing needs and housing design for seniors.

5. That financial options and support services to enable seniors to remain in their own homes continue to be explored and implemented.

Pensions and Income Security
Workshop #15

Summary of Recommendations:

The Workshop was concerned with ensuring that all older Manitobans have incomes that are adequate to their needs. Recommendations did not reflect a desire to change the present system, but to improve it. Hence the Workshop recommended that public pensions provide an adequate basic income floor, and that they remain universal and indexed to the cost of living. Special attention should be given to identifying and upgrading the incomes of groups who are economically disadvantaged. Pension regulation should move private pension plans toward standardization and portability, and tax regulations should favor individual pension investment. Younger people should be informed about, and encouraged to plan for their retirement.

Status of Recommendations:

In studying these recommendations, Council observed that the Federal CPP, OAS and GIS and the Provincial Supplement guarantee a basic minimum income to all Manitobans who are eligible for these benefits, but since the amount consistently falls below poverty line figures, it cannot be said to be adequate. The incomes of those who are ineligible for OAS/GIS and CPP, namely some women 55 to 65 years of age, and recent immigrants over 65 are especially unsatisfactory. Private pension legislation requiring joint and survivor benefits and pre-retirement death benefits have been beneficial in improving the incomes of widows of plan members, many of whom fall into the former category.

The Manitoba Pension Commission's regulations have improved employer-sponsored private pensions in Manitoba but have not been able to move them toward portability, and only minimally toward standardization of pension formulae. It has been highly active in promoting and educating Manitobans on financial planning through employer sponsored pension plans.

For the most part, Manitobans who purchase RRSP's are not disadvantaged financially, and there is now greater flexibility in deregistration options than was the case at the time of the Conference. Tax reform proposals related to registered pension plans have not been finally announced.

Ongoing Recommendations:

1. The combined effect of OAS, GIS, CPP and the Provincial Supplement must increase incomes of seniors up to poverty levels in order to be considered on adequate basic incomes.

2. The incomes of special groups who are not now eligible for universal Federal and Provincial pension benefits (women 55-65; recent immigrant seniors) must be upgraded to poverty level.

3. The Provincial Pension Commission must strive toward pension regulation which improved portability between plans.

4. Employers and seniors organizations should play a more prominent role in the education of younger persons for retirement.

Media Images of the Older Generation
Workshop #16

Summary of Recommendations:

Recommendations aimed at improving the public's image of the elderly, and removing stereotypes associated with aging emerged from six of the workshops of this Conference. Generally, recommendations were of two kinds: that the media portray the older generation in a more realistic and positive manner, and that educational institutions include information about aging at all levels of their curricula.

Status of Recommendations:

While older adults are still under represented in the media relative to other age groups, the way in which they are portrayed appears to be improving in the direction of a more realistically vigorous and active image. The Discover Choices television series, broadcast in the fall of 1988, and re-broadcast in spring 1989, portrayed a realistic image of seniors and the issues of concern to them. This trend may be expected to continue as writers and advertisers become more aware of the demographic changes taking place in the population and their implications in the marketplace.

Within the public school system, the topic of aging is not specifically addressed in the curriculum, but an understanding and appreciation of the needs and interests of the elderly is incorporated throughout the curriculum. In Winnipeg, Creative Retirement has worked with the Department of Education from time to time on curriculum development, and through its Seniors in the Schools program, students are in direct contact with seniors.

In spite of this progress, the concerns expressed in these workshops are still relevant. Council believes that seniors themselves should take the initiative in improving the image of the older generation.

Ongoing Recommendations:

1. That seniors organizations play an active role in working with the media to present a positive realistic image of aging in general programming and advertising.

1. That seniors organizations work with the schools to develop curriculum components dealing with aging.

Emotional and Spiritual Well-Being in the Life of the Elderly
Workshop #17

Summary of Recommendations

The way in which the community might assist elderly people to deal with their emotional and spiritual needs and the impact of changes that take place with aging was the concern of this workshop. Recommendations dealt with the number of issues, such as the training of workers with the elderly, attitudes engendered by media portrayals of old people and preparation for retirement, which are the topics of other workshops. As well, this workshop recommended an increase in community services which would address the emotional and spiritual needs of older people.

Status of Recommendations

Council has noted an increase in courses for families and caregivers on this issue, especially those offered through the pastoral departments of hospitals and personal care homes. It also observed that emotional and spiritual needs were no different for the elderly than for younger people.

Ongoing Recommendations

That counselling for elderly persons be more readily available in the community.

Victimization of Vulnerable Adults
Workshop #18

Summary of Recommendations:

The topic of this workshop refers to crimes against vulnerable adults, especially seniors, committed by strangers. Participants recommended the expansion of education and preventive programs, and of services to victims of crime, to all parts of Manitoba by the Victim/Witness Assistance Advisory Board. As well, seniors groups should inform themselves in order to address the problem of victimization.

The workshop also recommended that police officers be especially trained and assigned to work with the elderly, and that elderly victims not be identified to the media.

Status of Recommendations:

The Victim/Witness Assistance Program of the Attorney General's Department provides information to victims and witnesses of crime, and has a toll free number for easy access from all parts of the province. As part of this program, grants are provided by the Victims Assistance Committee to fund projects related to victim services, information and awareness, and research (in that order of priority) with special emphasis on services in rural areas. It appears that few rural communities have applied. This fund supports the Age & Opportunity Centre's Older Victim Service. A representative from Age & Opportunity sits on the Victim/Witness Assistance Advisory Board.

The Winnipeg Police work closely with Age & Opportunity by referring all elderly crime victims to the Older Victim Service. As well, it now operates its own Victim Service, and police officers' training has increasingly sensitized them to the needs of victims of crime. The RCMP's Crime Prevention/Victim Services places priority on the needs of the elderly. Both forces advise that it would not be practical to provide services exclusive to the elderly.

A ban on the publication of names of victims would require legislation which may be in conflict with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Winnipeg Police, however, have a policy of not releasing the names of victims to the media.

Ongoing Recommendations:

1. That communities outside of Winnipeg provide services to older victims/witnesses of crime.

2. That initiatives which are currently underway be monitored on an annual basis.*

* The RCMP has recently announced its hope to extend victim services to areas outside of Winnipeg (November 1989).